

VIRGINIA HUD LINES

JANUARY 2003

E-Briefs from the Richmond Office of the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

800/842-2610, ext 3745

Mary Ann Wilson, Director www.hud.gov/virginia

HUD TO END "REGULATORY DISCRIMINATION" AGAINST FAITH-BASED GROUPS

Saying an "organization's faith should not be the yardstick we use to measure the ability to serve families and communities," HUD Secretary Mel Martinez has proposed a rule to "end this form of regulatory discrimination." It will make clear that participating groups may not use HUD funds for "inherently religious activities such as worship, religious instruction or proselytizing" or for facilities used for such purposes. It also will insure such organizations can maintain their independence by not requiring, for example, removal of religious art from their facilities or to select board members without regard to their religious beliefs, will prohibit the groups from discriminating against potential program beneficiaries because of their religious beliefs. The rule will insure that such groups are not "singled-out" with additional tests they alone must pass. The proposal covers virtually every HUD program and will take effect 60 days after publication in *The Federal Register*.

HIGHER FHA MORTGAGE LIMITS TAKE EFFECT

With \$2.7 billion in FHA-insured mortgages "booked" in Virginia in the first 11 months of 2002, there was cause for further celebration on New Year's Day 2003 with a 7.3 percent increase in the FHA mortgage limit to \$154,896 on a single-family home. The limit on 2-family homes was raised to \$198,288; on 3-family homes to \$239,664; and on 4-family homes to \$297,840. The increase benefits every rural area as well as cities like Blacksburg, Bristol, Danville, Emporia, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, Lexington, Marion, Martinsville, Roanoke, South Boston, Staunton, Waynesboro and Winchester. Higher limits already in effect in "high cost" markets like Richmond, Tidewater and Charlottesville metro areas remain unchanged. For FHA limits in your area, visit www.hud.gov/virginia

BRIEF BRIEFS

Scott Harvard, CEO of Shore Bank in Onley, elected to Board of Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta . . . VHDA raises limit on Flexible Alternative loans to \$79,000 on loans closed after January 1st, 2003. . . HUD Secretary Martinez says that, under Soldier & Sailor's Civil Relief Act, Ginnie Mae to now reimburse FHA lenders for "interest shortfall" for Reservists and National Guard personnel "called to active duty" anywhere, not just specified theaters. . . "People have just been wonderful," DOVES director Kathy Martin tells *Register Bee* after "army of angels. . . gathered supplies and showered Danville's domestic violence shelter with presents and provisions" . . . Governor Warner and DHCD's Virginia Enterprise Institute awards \$605,000 to microenterprise funds in Alexandria, Christiansburg, Lynchburg, Petersburg, Portsmouth, Richmond, Roanoke, Saluda and Warsaw. . . vneal@nnrha.org still taking reservations for VACHDO's winter meeting at Richmond Omni January 26th to 28th. . . National columnist William Raspberry praises "entrepreneurial drive" of five teens who, seven years ago, started Pizza-Ria delivery service for public housing residents with \$400 start-up loan from Norfolk Redevelopment & Housing . . . Santa visits 24 families with gifts of furniture, clothing and, yes, toys thanks to Weed & Seed, Virginia National Guard, Richmond Police, Philip Morris and Richmond Redevelopment & Housing. . . January 17th set as deadline for preliminary applications for MetLife Foundation/LISC Community Police Partnership grant program. . . Hampton Roads Homeless Consortium Networking Conference convenes January 31st at Tidewater Community College in Portsmouth. . . Jeff Gaffney named "Realtor of the Year" by Charlottesville Area Realtors . . . With \$420,000 in HUD Continuum of Care funds, LynCAG opens two renovated homes to provide temporary lodging to large families dislocated by fires or other disasters. . . Governor Warner names Herman Key of Charlottesville to Real Estate Board and Betty Ann Davis of Williamsburg to Board of Housing & Community Development.

HELP FOR THE HOMELESS

Some 43 Virginia groups received \$15,145,437 under HUD's Continuum of Care and Emergency Shelter Grant programs. The award includes renewal funding for existing homeless service programs in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Richmond, Roanoke, Virginia Beach, the Shenandoah Valley and northern Virginia as well as new homeless initiatives in Arlington, Charlottesville, Chesapeake, Hampton, Lynchburg, Petersburg, Portsmouth, Waynesboro and Fairfax and Prince William counties. The grants, Congresswoman JoAnn Davis told *The Daily Press*, will help the homeless "more easily make the transition to self-sufficient and independent living." Details are available at www.hud.gov/virginia.

HUD RICHMOND OKAYS CHESTERFIELD COMPLEX

HUD Richmond has okayed the initial closing of 320-unit, \$26.8 million Park at Salisbury complex at Wylderose and Otterdale roads in Midlothian area of Chesterfield County. The complex will have 60 2-bedroom units, 210 two-bedroom units, 50 3-bedroom units, with rents from \$790 to \$1,150 per month. Lender is Highland Mortgage of Mechanicsville.

A BI-STATE APPROACH

Four communities – Bristol in Virginia and Kingsport, Johnson City and Bristol in Tennessee – have received HUD's approval to reach across state lines and form a new HOME consortium that will bring some \$995,000 in new housing resources into the communities. It's one of just a handful of bi-state HOME consortia across the country. HOME funds can be used for down payment assistance, new construction, rehabilitation of owner-occupied and rental housing. During fiscal year 2002, HUD allocated \$31.6 million in HOME funds to 19 communities and consortia in Virginia.

DON'T FORGET!

The HUD Holiday Sales Allowance of up to \$1,500 on a "closed" HUD home is available only on properties sold by January 31st, 2003. For more information, contact www.firstpreston.com